



Welcome to another issue of The Green Pennant Special, the official publication of The Omnibus Society of America.

Through this publication we hope to keep our readers informed of events happening in the transit industry in Chicago and other cities in the United States.

• FEBRUARY OSA MEETING

The next regular meetings of the Omnibus Society of America will be on February 7, 2003, in the Anderson Pavilion of Swedish Covenant Hospital, 2751 W. Winona Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The meeting will be start at 7:00 pm.

The hospital is on California near Foster. Winona is one half block south of Foster. By public transportation, take the 92 Foster to California. From the Ravenswood Brown Line, take the 93 North California from Kimball, get off after it turns onto California from Foster and walk back south. Or, take the 11 Lincoln from Western, get off at Carmen (One block south of Foster) and walk west on Winona.

There is some parking on California and Winona. The parking structure is on the west side of California just south of Foster.

Our meeting for the evening will be a slide presentation by Mike Shiffer, Vice President – Service Planning, Chicago Transit Authority, titled “Planned Changes in Bus Operations”.

• CTA HAPPENINGS

The CTA Board on January 6th approved a plan to renovate the 107-year-old ‘L’ connector track just west of Paulina that links the Green Line on Lake Street with the Cermak (Douglas) branch of the Blue Line at Congress Parkway.

The Paulina Connector project will include rehabilitation of the elevated structure and installation of a second track, third (power) rail and cab signal system. The 3/4-mile-long structure currently has a single track that is used to shuttle cars requiring major maintenance between the Blue Line and the CTA’s Rail Heavy Maintenance Shop in Skokie.

Contracts for work on the Cermak branch Blue Line Reconstruction Project will be modified to include the \$3.8 million cost of renovating the ‘L’ connector. The work of restoring the connector is substantially the same as that taking place on the Blue Line project, except that there are no stations on the connector, which would be an

extension of the Cermak branch itself.

Kiewit-Delgado Joint Venture, the contractor handling the Blue Line project, has the labor force and equipment already in place to complete the connection project, and combining the two projects will provide cost and planning efficiencies that would not be possible under a separate contract. Board action approved \$29.5 million to enable Kiewit-Delgado to complete the project.

“Renovation of the Paulina Connector will provide greater flexibility in how we operate our rail system,” said CTA President Frank Kruesi. “With this new set of tracks tying the Blue and Green Lines together, we will have the ability to run Cermak branch trains directly to the Loop ‘L’ on Lake Street and increase the frequency of both Cermak and Forest Park Blue Line service.”

A Chicago man will spend three years in prison for vandalizing Chicago Transit Authority property. Carlos Sanchez pled guilty to charges of felony criminal damage to property and damage to state-supported property on January 16, 2003. His plea comes as the CTA strengthens its crackdown on vandals.

On October 30, 2002, Chicago Police conducting surveillance along the Orange Line caught the 18-year-old Sanchez and a juvenile vandalizing six panes of glass on a CTA rail platform at 3528 South Leavitt at the 35th/Archer Station. The defendant admitted to police that he used etching cream to etch “MC” into the glass.

Damages in excess of \$300 qualifies as a felony offence in Illinois. According to the CTA’s law department this incident is the first time someone has been charged with a felony for acid etching on its property. (www.yourcta.com)

• METRA MATTERS

Thursday, January 30, 2003, saw Metra announce plans to build a new service line that would introduce a state-of-the-art new fleet of Diesel Multiple Unit trains (DMUs) to connect nearly 100 communities in the region with reliable commuter rail service.

The 55-mile STAR line – only the second new commuter rail line in the region’s nearly 150-year-old history of commuter rail service – creates a dynamic suburban transportation grid that will complement Metra’s existing high-performing suburb-to-city service model and position Illinois among the leaders in the nation for inter-suburban commuter rail connectivity. (Cont. on page 2)

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METRA

Metra outlined the following proposed two-segment route for the STAR Line:

- **OUTER CIRCUMFERENTIAL SEGMENT (OCS):** Joliet to Hoffman Estates (at Prairie Stone) via the Elgin Joliet & Eastern Railway (EJ&E) corridor.
- **NORTHWEST CORRIDOR SEGMENT (NWCS):** new alignment connecting the OCS to the I-90 corridor via a connection at Prairie Stone east to O'Hare International Airport along I-90 to the Des Plaines Oasis, then south on the freight railroad corridor to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and the CTA connection at the proposed new western terminal.

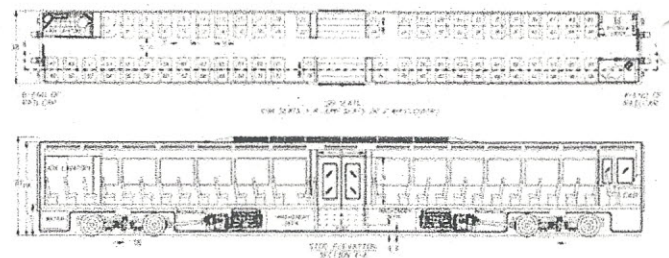
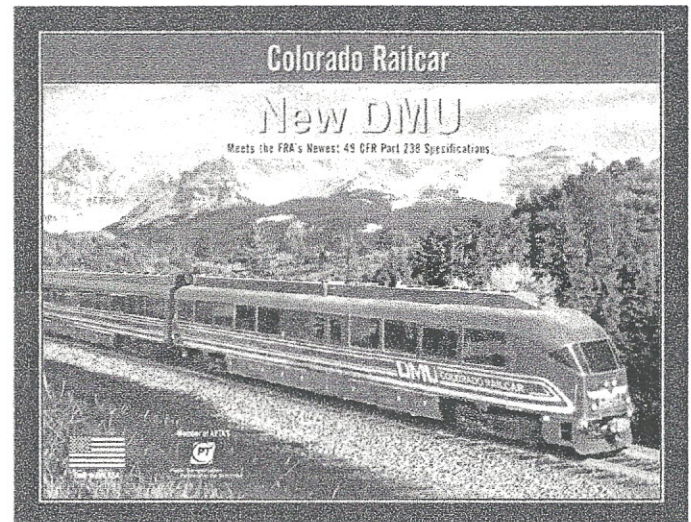
Metra's new STAR Line lies within five miles of many of the region's fastest-growing new housing developments, major hospitals, college and university campuses, large shopping malls, and major business headquarters such as 3 Com, BP, Fermi Lab, IKEA, Lucent Technologies, Motorola, Navistar, Nicor, Pfizer, SBC, Sears, Siemens, and Tellabs, among others. Additionally, the eastern end of the new service line feeds into O'Hare International Airport.

Metra officials issued their report, which outlines the feasibility of this new route in two segments, with potential to extend service in later phases east from Joliet, north and east from Prairie Stone, south along the Route 53/Interstate 290 corridor, and from O'Hare to Midway Airports.

"Metra is very excited to announce the most innovative transportation proposal the region has seen since the advent of the inter-state highway system. The STAR Line marks a new day for inter-suburban transportation. The STAR Line begins to create a dynamic transportation grid that will deliver commuter rail service and give suburban motorists an alternative to the automobile," said Jeffrey R. Ladd, chairman of Metra's Board of Directors.

Ladd also pointed to the chronic congestion experienced today by area motorists, noting that national transportation studies indicate the average time area motorists might experience congestion has increased from 4.5 hours per day in 1982 to 7.8 hours per day in 0220. The STAR Line offers a transportation option for motorists who make 3.7 million daily car trips to work along the defined route.

"Because economic development and transportation networks are inexorably linked, the STAR Line's time is now," said Ladd. "The state-of-the-art DMU trains are 12 times more fuel-efficient than existing equipment and will allow Metra the flexibility we need to deliver frequency of service on this commuter rail transportation network."



"The STAR Line delivers that critical first step in creating a suburban alternative to the automobile. It will get more people out of their cars, into state-of-the-art trains, and reduce roadway congestion. It truly is a new era in suburban transportation," he added.

Metra Also Announces Three New Infrastructure/Upgrade Initiatives.

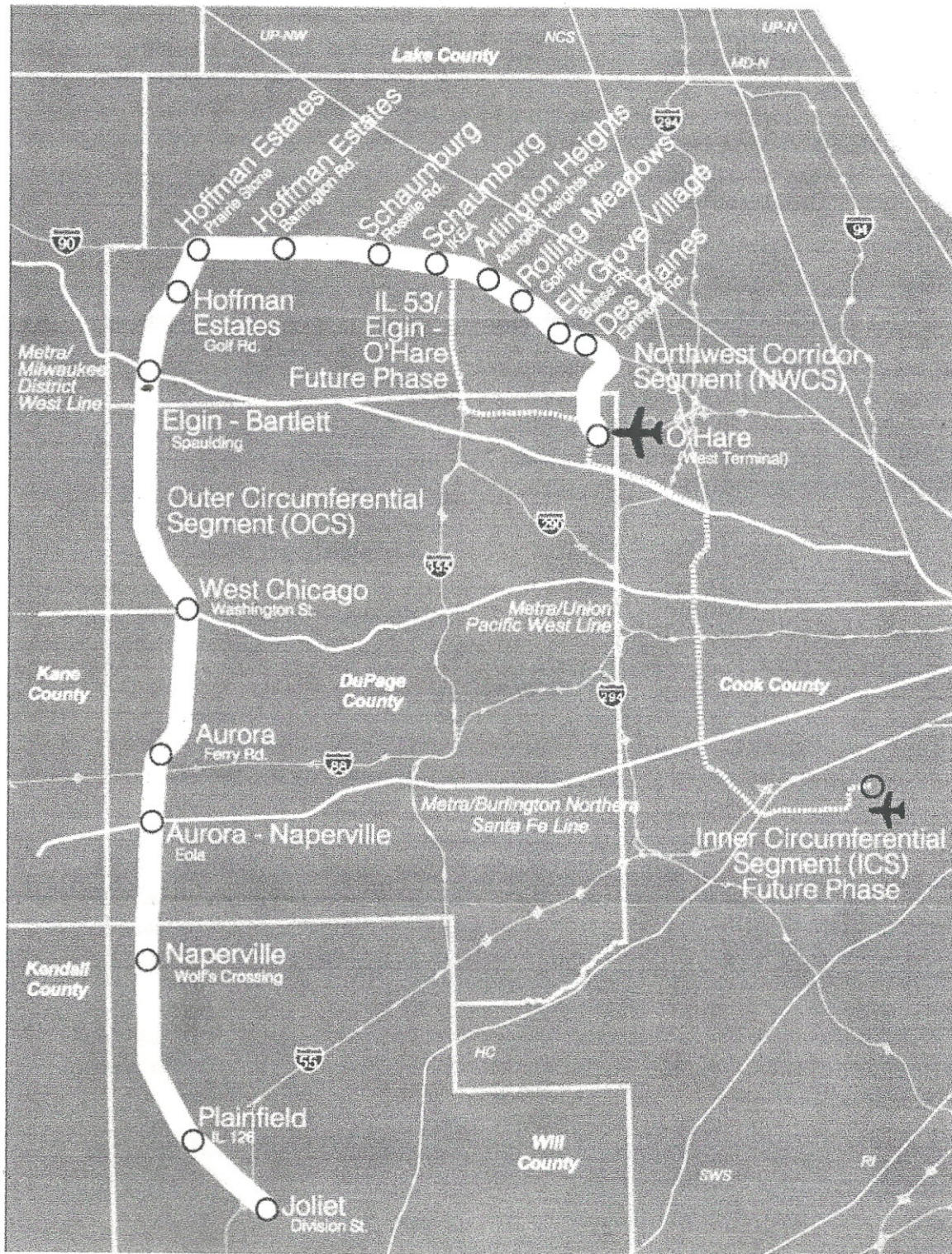
Metra's Chairman and Executive Director also announced three new initiatives that will impact more than 60 percent of its customer base, continuing to strengthen the levels of on-time performance for Metra's customers.

(Cont on Page 4)

STAR Line

(Suburban Transit Access Route)

Metra



METRA

In concert, these three initiatives address key bottlenecks in the optimum efficiency of Metra's system and will deliver customers more of what they want from Metra; greater frequency, more express service, more off-peak service, more reverse-commute service, and industry-leading reliability levels.

- **UNION PACIFIC NORTHWEST LINE (9.2 Million annual passenger trips and 231,128,000 passenger miles on Metra's system):**

Metra will seek funding to upgrade a service line that today accounts for more than 9 million passenger trips annually on its system. Population and job-based development along this line is projected to lead the region, with some communities projected to grow by as much as 56 percent in the next 20 years. Metra believes it must get ahead of this aggressive demand curve today by upgrading the capacity of service on this line.

- **UNION PACIFIC WEST LINE (6.9 million passenger trips and 151,288,900 passenger miles on Metra's system):**

Metra has targeted reliability improvements for the Union Pacific West line, which operates on one of the nation's major pathways for freight traffic. Metra is pursuing funding to create greater flexibility along the route to manage freight congestion and create growth in frequency and efficiency of commuter service on this line.

- **A-2 INTERLOCKER (Affects performance of six Metra lines that provide 52 million annual passenger trips):**

Metra is pursuing funding to alleviate a critical choke point in its system, updating the configuration of seven tracks that feed into two of its major downtown Chicago stations (Chicago Union Station and Ogilvie Transportation Center). Once completed, this new configuration will allow Metra's trains to operate at higher speeds through this "intersection", providing customers with faster, more reliable service. This interlocker is the busiest in the region's entire transportation network.

- CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

In cooperation with the various rail and transit enthusiast organizations meeting in Chicago, we present this "Calendar of Events".

Feb. 14. Chicago Chapter - Railway & Locomotive Historical Society meeting. 7:00pm. The Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington - Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium). Admission is free. Program - *Current Railroads and Passenger Train Operations in Washington State*, a slide presentation by Mike Blaszak.

Feb. 21. The Railroad Club of Chicago meeting. 7:30pm. The Chicago Temple (77 W. Washington - Pierce Hall (lower level auditorium). Donation of \$3.00 requested for non-members. Program - *Streamliners*, a video presentation by Barry R. Binder.

Feb. 28. Central Electric Railfans' Association meeting. 7:30pm. 205 W. Wacker Drive Suite 200 (Securities Training Corp). \$5.00 admission for non-members. Program - *Chicago Transit in Winter*, a slide presentation by George Kanary.

An online version of our Calendar of Events is available, courtesy of the Shore Line Interurban Historical Society, at www.shore-line.org/calendar.html